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Gaming ApparatusField of the Invention

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This invention relates to gaming apparatus.

Description of the Prior Art

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Gaming machines for playing card games, for example poker and blackjack are well known.

Summary of the Invention

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According to one aspect of this invention, there is provided gaming apparatus comprising: symbol providing means for providing a plurality of symbols, each symbol having a respective win designation; display means for displaying each symbol to a user; symbol control means for providing each symbol with a viewable condition in which the respective win designation can be displayed on the display means, and a non-viewable condition in which the respective win designation cannot be viewed; and

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selection means operable by the user for selecting each symbol in turn, wherein upon selection of each symbol, the respective symbol is disposed in its viewable condition, and win means for registering the final symbol to be selected and providing a win in accordance with the win designation of said final symbol.

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Preferably, the selection means is operable to select each symbol on specific selection of the respective symbol by the user. The selection means may be configured to select the aforesaid final symbol when the user has selected the penultimate symbol.

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The symbols may be representations of cards in which one face thereof includes the respective win designation. The symbols may include representations of playing cards.

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The win designations may represent values, for example monetary values, or may represent multiples of an amount, for example of a monetary amount.

5 In one embodiment, the win designations may be the same each time the apparatus is used. In another embodiment, the win designations may vary each time the apparatus is used.

10 According to another aspect of this invention, there is provided a gaming assembly comprising a plurality of gaming apparatus associated with each other, wherein at least one of the symbols has a variable win designation, said variable win designation being dependent upon a proportion of money entered into each of said apparatus for the purpose of playing.

15 Preferably, the selection of the aforesaid symbol results in the user winning the amount of money accumulated from each of said gaming apparatus.

20 Preferably the gaming apparatus is substantially as described in any of paragraphs three to seven above.

Brief Description of the Drawings

25 An embodiment of the invention will now be described by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Fig. 1 is a front view of a gaming apparatus in use;

Fig. 2 is a front view of a gaming apparatus shown in Fig. 1 after it has been further used;

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Fig. 3 is a diagrammatic cross-sectional side view of the apparatus shown in Fig. 1; and

Fig. 4 shows a gaming assembly.

BEST AVAILABLE COPYDetailed Description of Embodiments of the Invention

Referring to Figs. 1 and 2 of the drawings, there is shown gaming apparatus 10
5 for playing a game. The apparatus 10 can be, if desired, used for playing a main game,
with the game the subject of the present invention being supplementary to the main
game. The main game may be, for example, a game of poker, as described below.

The apparatus 10 comprises a housing 12 for housing the components thereof.
10 Display means in the form of a screen 14 is provided in an upper region of the housing
12. Below the screen 14 there is provided operating means in the form of a plurality of
buttons 16A-E, the purpose of which will be described below. Underneath the buttons
16A-E there is provided a win retrieval arrangement defining an aperture 18 which leads
15 to a chute 20 to enable the user to retrieve coins or tokens in the event of a win, as will
be explained below.

At the top of the housing 12 there is provided a payment arrangement 22, to
enable a user to effect payment for playing the game. The payment arrangement 22
comprises an insert slot 24 via which a user can insert coins or tokens, and a reject slot
20 26 through which inappropriate coins or tokens can be rejected.

Fig. 3 shows a diagrammatic sectional side view of the apparatus in Figs. 1 and
2. In Fig. 2, the components are represented schematically. The components of the
apparatus 10 comprise a central processing means or processor 28 for controlling the
25 gaming apparatus 10. The screen 14 is electronically connected to the processor 28, as
represented by the broken line 30.

The apparatus 10 also comprises coin storage means 34 for storing coins which
are inserted into the apparatus when the apparatus is to be played. The coin storage
30 means 34 communicates with the coin receiving slot 24 via a coin conduit 36. A coin
reader 38 is provided on the coin conduit 36 to determine the value of coins inserted into
the coin receiving slot 24.

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4

In the event that the coin reader 38 detects an inappropriate coin, for example a coin of the wrong denomination, it will be rejected via the coin reject slot 26.

5 The coin reader 38 is electronically connected to the processor 28 so that information relating to the amount of money or tokens inserted is transmitted to the processor 28. The electronic connection between the coin reader 38 and the processor 28 is represented by the broken line 40.

10 The coin storage means 34 is connected to the processor 26 by an electronic connection represented by the broken line 42.

 Dispensing means 44 is provided on the coin storage means 34. The dispensing means 44 is electronically connected to the processor 28 by a connection represented
15 by the broken line 48.

 The coins in the coin storage means 34 can be sorted into respective different denominations for dispensing by the dispensing means 44. The connection 42 of the coin storage means 34 to the processor 28 allows the transfer of information relating to
20 the number and amount of coins stored in the coin storage means 34 to the processor 28. When a player wins, the processor 28 directs the dispensing means 44 to dispense coins from the coin storage means 34 onto the chute 20 to the value of the amount won. The coins won can be retrieved from the chute 20 via the aperture 18 by the player.

25 The operating buttons 16A-E are electronically connected to the processor 28 as shown by the broken line 50.

 In use, when a player inserts coins to an appropriate value into the coin receiving slot 24. The processor 28 then causes the screen 14 to display representations of five
30 cards 52A-52E, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. Each of the cards 52A-52E is provided with a win designation, which, in the embodiment shown, is in the form of an amount of money to be won. The representations of the cards are displayed on the screen 14 in a non-viewable condition, i.e. face down, so that the user cannot see the win designations on each card 52A-E.

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In order to play the game, the user then selects which cards are to be rejected by the processor 28. Four of the cards 52A-E are selected for rejection and the remaining one of the cards 52A-E is the card which provides the user with the win.

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In more detail, each of the cards 52A-E corresponds to a respective one of the operating buttons 16A-E. As explained above, each of the cards 52A-E is shown face down, i.e. so that the user can see only the backs of the cards 52A-E. Fig. 1 shows a stage of the game where three cards, namely cards 52C, 52D and 52E have been selected already so that these cards are in their respective viewable conditions, and the win designations of these cards are visible. The cards 52A and 52B have not yet been selected so that these cards are in their respective non-viewable conditions, and the win designation of these cards cannot be seen by the user.

In order to play the game, the user selects which of the cards 52A-E is to be rejected by pressing the appropriate button 16A-E. For example, if he wishes to select the card 52E, the button 16E would be pressed. Similarly, to select the card 52C, the button 16C would be pressed, and so on. Each time one of the buttons 16A-E is pressed, the corresponding card is moved to its viewable condition, for example by the display means simulating the cards being turned over so that its respective win designation can be seen by the user. After the user has selected four of the cards 52A-E, and these four cards thereby being rejected, the remaining or final card is the card which will provide the user with a win. The remaining card is then automatically moved to its viewable condition by the processor 28 to reveal the value of the win designation of the card. For example, as shown in Fig. 2, all of the cards 52A-52E have been selected. If the final card to be selected was the card 52B, the player would win the amount shown on the card 52B, namely £500.

If desired, the win designations on each card could be multiples of the amount inserted into the slot 24 of the apparatus 10, and could be, for example, "x 1000", "x 500", "x 250", "x 100" and "x 50". It will be appreciated that the win designations could be of any value and, if desired, at least one of them could represent a win of zero.

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Various modifications can be made without departing from the scope of the invention, for example when each of the cards 52A-E is selected, it could be removed from the screen, or represented in some way to show that the user has not won this amount. Also, the buttons 16A to E could be replaced by the screen 14 being in the form of a touch sensitive screen, whereby a user touching the screen 14 on one of the representations of the cards 52A to E could cause the win designation of that card to be revealed. A further modification is that there could be any number of cards 52, for example seven or ten, each having appropriate win designation.

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Also, if desired, the apparatus could be programmed to operate with the use of notes and/or credit cards or debit cards. In such cases, the payment arrangement 22 would be modified, in a known way, to deal with such payment methods. Also, the win retrieval arrangement might need to be modified in a way known in the art.

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The game described in the gaming apparatus 10 could be a stand alone game or a supplementary game to a further game played on the apparatus 10. For example, the gaming apparatus 10 could be programmed to enable the user to play a game of poker or blackjack. Alternatively, the gaming apparatus could be programmed to enable the user to play a game in the form of a standard slot machine type game. Such games are well known in this field and will not be described in detail in this application. The game described above could be accessed on any desired basis, for example randomly or by achieving certain card or reel combinations in the main game. The buttons 100 shown in Figs. 1 and 2 are provided to enable the user to operate the main game.

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Referring to Fig. 4, there is shown a game assembly 150 comprising a plurality of game apparatus 10 linked to a central processor unit 152. Each of the game apparatus 10 operates independently of the others, with the exception that the central processor registers that a proportion of the money inputted to each game, for example 3%, is available to win by the players on any of the gaming apparatus 10 comprised in the gaming assembly.

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In operation, one of the cards 52A-E shown on each gaming apparatus could have as its win designation the amount of money which has been stored by the central

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processor 152 since the last time that particular card was selected as the final card. If this card is selected by the user as the final card, then the user would win the amount which is stored by the central processor.

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Whilst endeavouring in the foregoing specification to draw attention to those features of the invention believed to be of particular importance it should be understood that the Applicant claims protection in respect of any patentable feature or combination of features hereinbefore referred to and/or shown in the drawings whether or not

10 particular emphasis has been placed thereon.